



Department Updates

August / September 2021

Child Support Agency

Lynette Metcalf, Program Manager

August is Child Support Awareness month. The Department of Children and Families (DCF), Lac du Flambeau Tribal Child Support Program and the Wisconsin Child Support Enforcement Association (WCSEA) are hosting a virtual food drive throughout August to raise funds to combat child hunger in honor of Child Support Awareness month.

Workforce Resource and the Child Support Agency is hosting another in person job fair on August 25, 2021 at the Barron County Justice Center parking lot from 1:30pm to 4:30pm. The Child Support Agency continues their collaboration with Workforce Resource in helping not only child support clients, but also all community members, find employment.

Child Support funding is based on performance guideline categories of Court Order Establishment, Paternity Establishment, Current Child Support Collections, and Arrears Collections. The graph below represents a comparison of the Barron County Child Support Agency current performance with the State of Wisconsin's FFY Target goal and the State of Wisconsin's FFY 2020 overall state performance.

	Barron County as of July 31, 2021	Wisconsin Target Rate at FFY End	Wisconsin FFY 2020
Court Order Establishment	92.77%	80%	100.11%
Paternity Establishment	106.75%	90%	86.21%
Current Child Support	78.49%	80%	74.10%
Arrears Collection	73.65%	80%	73.58%

The Barron County Child Support Agency was able to collect a total of \$1,305,669.07 in child support from May 1, 2021 through July 31, 2021 through April 30, 2021 to support our client's families.

The Child Support window remains open to the public from 8:00am-4:30pm. Our staff continues rotating time in the office and working remotely. Child Support clients are strongly encouraged to call (715) 537-6390 or email our agency at childsupport@co.barron.wi.us to set up an appointment with their caseworker to ensure availability.

Child Support court hearings continue to be held via Zoom for our clients.

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County Clerk

DeeAnn Cook, County Clerk

Our marriage license applications have picked up significantly. At the end of July 2020 we had issued 98 licenses. As of the end of July this year, we have issued 152. At this rate, we could see 300 by the end of the year, especially with fall weddings becoming so popular.

Our current election equipment is nearing the end of its useful life and soon will not be supported. For that reason, we invited all vendors with voting equipment approved by the State of Wisconsin to come and demonstrate their equipment to our Municipal Clerk group. All three vendors approved in Wisconsin attended including Clear Ballot, Command Central and ES&S. Most of the municipal clerks attended either the morning or afternoon session and each vendor was given an equal amount of time to showcase their equipment and answer questions from the clerks. We then met a couple times as a group to discuss which type of equipment will best serve our needs for years to come. After plenty of analyzing the functionality and cost, we took a vote to make the final decision as to which equipment to purchase. ES&S received 26 votes and Command Central received 5. The remaining municipalities either did not attend the demos or did not have a strong opinion either way so they deferred to the group. The county previously agreed to partner with municipalities by contributing \$1,000 toward the purchase of new equipment provided that municipalities agree to purchase from the same vendor. It is advantageous to the county to have only one vendor to work with for programming, maintenance, etc. This will mean a change in vendors since we have been using Command Central equipment for the past many years. They provided excellent customer service and we were very happy with their equipment and services but the clerks determined that the new ES&S equipment better serves our needs going forward. Municipalities have now determined the quantity of equipment they will be needing and our order is in process. Tentative plan is for the equipment to be delivered the first week in January 2022 and training sessions will be held for clerks and their deputy or chief inspector. Our first election using the new equipment is set for Feb. 2022.

Treasurer's Office

PRESS RELEASE

Office of State Treasurer
Sarah Godlewski

Pilot Program to Prevent Property Tax Foreclosure Kicked Off by State Treasurer's Homeowners Task Force

Six Wisconsin counties now have a tool to help homeowners facing foreclosure due to delinquent property tax payments

MADISON, Wis. — Adams, Barron, Douglas, Grant, Langlade, and Price counties now have a program to help low to moderate homeowners stay in their homes by assisting with delinquent property taxes. Part of the recent Treasurers' Homeowners Task Force, State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski, the Foundation for Rural Housing, and county treasurers from the six counties kicked off the Property Tax Revolving Loan Program this summer, which was outlined in the [recently published task force report](#). This newly launched pilot program is an example of this task force not just making recommendations — but implementing creative solutions to help homeowners.

“For so many families in Wisconsin, owning a home is key to stability and financial security,” said **State Treasurer Sarah Godlewski**. “Whether it’s due to unemployment or under-employment because of COVID, or a financial crisis that pre-dates the pandemic, falling behind on property taxes can often become an insurmountable burden that can lead to foreclosure. This pilot program is a critical first step to help low to moderate-income homeowners address late property taxes and keep Wisconsinites in their homes.”

Per state statute, interest and penalties on delinquent property taxes accrue at 1 to 1.5% per month, meaning 12-18% after the first year, 24-36% after two years, and 36-54% after three years. Past due property tax payments can also disqualify homeowners from other sources of assistance, further preventing them from getting back on their feet after a financial crisis. The Property Tax Revolving Loan Program provides affordable financing to get homeowners off the path to foreclosure and provides financial counseling to ensure stability in the future.

“When homeowners are going through financial difficulties, immediate needs such as groceries and childcare often take priority,” said **Carrie Eastlick, Grant County Treasurer**. “State statutes make it impossible for homeowners to negotiate late payment charges or establish flexible payment plans. With this new pilot program, we can help homeowners in my community get back on track.”

“As county treasurers, we’re often seen as just the tax collectors, but we’re engaged in ensuring the financial security of our communities,” said **Lynn Neeck, Price County Treasurer**. “This partnership between the Foundation for Rural Housing and the State Treasurer’s Office gives us a tool to help homeowners at a time they need it most.”

Made possible with a \$75,000 grant and administered by the Foundation for Rural Housing, the pilot program will assist homeowners with delinquent property taxes in Adams, Barron, Douglas, Grant, Langlade, and Price counties, with the intention to build data and capacity for a statewide program in the future.

“Delinquent property tax assistance has long been a gap in assistance for homeowners in Wisconsin,” said **Jenny Fasula**. “Partnering with county treasurers, allows us to connect with homeowners in need more effectively, and this new tool gives us an opportunity to provide assistance in these six counties while gathering data on the potential need for a statewide program.”

Residents in Adams, Barron, Douglas, Grant, Langlade, and Price counties, who are in need of assistance are encouraged to review the [program brochure](#) and contact the Foundation for Rural Housing at (888) 400-5974 or email wrh@wisconsinruralhousing.org. Homeowners in need of assistance in other Wisconsin counties are encouraged to contact the newly launched Take Root Wisconsin at <https://takerootwi.org/contact/>.

Highway Department

Mark Servi Highway Commissioner

The Highway Department has been working on many projects throughout the construction season. We have worked on many projects for the Towns, Cities and Villages, from maintenance activities such as crack filling and chip sealing to construction projects including paving, bridge and culvert work and gravel hauls. We would like to thank them for placing their trust in us to perform their projects in an efficient and cost effective manner. The crew takes pride in each project we complete for our local units of government.

On the County system, we performed crack filling and chip seal on CTH SS from Rice Lake to north of Haugen, CTH I from CTH A to Chetek and CTH V from Haugen to Brill. The CTH U paving project from Dallas to STH 25 has been completed, and we are currently working to complete paving of CTH F from the Dunn County line to west of the CTH F/A intersection on the north end of Prairie Farm. CTH A within the Prairie Farm Village limits is also a part of this contract. Paving should be completed next week.

On Sept 27 we will begin work on two projects on the county system. On CTH A, we are replacing a bridge near 20th St, performing culvert work near 19 ¼ St and cutting the hill at 18th St to improve vision at that intersection. CTH A will be closed to thru traffic from Dallas to the CTH A/I intersection, and there will be a detour route marked. This work is in preparation for the federally funded pavement replacement project that will be done on this section of CTH A in 2022. On CTH I we will be replacing the pavement from CTH A south to the Dunn County line. This work will be performed with the road being open to traffic and traffic in the work zone being controlled by flaggers.

We have also completed the mowing of the state and county roadways, and will move to brush cutting beyond the normal mowing limits on the county system as crew is available. Many other small maintenance projects are completed weekly and are too numerous to mention.

The mechanics are working out of the remaining half of the old shop. Despite the less than ideal work areas, they continue to keep our fleet up and running. Their good attitudes and skills are much appreciated as we need our equipment available for work.

As always, please be aware of work zones and changing road conditions. Our crew can be most anywhere working on projects, so if you encounter them, please follow their directions guiding you in the work zone. That way we can all go home safe.

Oh, and we have a facility construction project ongoing.....

Forestry

John Cisek County Forest Administrator

The Pine-Time sale in the Town of Maple Plain has been completed. Load slips are still being compiled.

No timber sale activity is currently taking place due to wet ground conditions.

Herbicide application took place in August on storm damage areas in the Silver Cr. Block and the Arland gun range. The purpose is to control buckthorn and prepare the sites for planting.

Finance

Jodi Busch Finance Director

Summer has flown by in the Finance Department. We worked with CliftonlarsenAllen to finalize the 2020 audit, which was submitted to the State of WI – Dept of Administration on July 31st. We also worked with Diversified Services Network, who was onsite for two days conducting the Indirect Cost Allocation Study. This plan was finalized in late July.

New projects in Finance over the summer were the financial tracking of the new Highway Facility, and planning and learning about the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). Barron County received our first tranche of ARPA dollars in late May. To date, we are still waiting for the final guidance of how these funds can be spent. However, using the interim guidance, research and planning has begun for a few infrastructure projects that may be used to serve the residents of Barron County.

July also brought the start of the annual budget process. Budget Worksheets were distributed to departments the week of July 12th and were due back to Finance on August 13th. Compilation of the first draft of the county-wide budget was completed over the last few weeks. Committee meetings are well underway to review and approve the departmental budgets. The first view of the budget as a whole will be in September at the Executive and County Board meetings.

Because some budget information is still outstanding, September continues to be a busy month making adjustments and tweaks before the October Executive, when the Committee will give a recommendation to the County Board. Based on that recommendation, a Budget Publication will be developed and published in all County newspapers. A Public Hearing will be held on November 1st, with the County Board approving the budget in early November.

After approval, the Finance Director will finalize the budget, file the appropriate reports with the municipalities and the State, and setup the budget in the financial software. About the time this process is completed, the auditors will be here again as they start the 2021 pre-audit in December. All of us in the Finance Department wish you a healthy, happy and colorful fall season.